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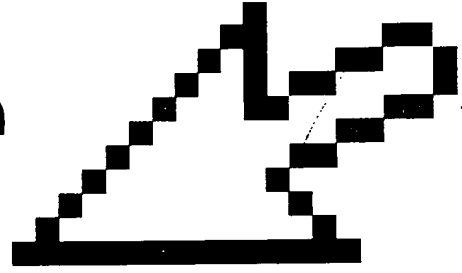
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# Microsoft Computer Dictionary

## Fifth Edition



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**abstract machine language** *n.* 1. An intermediate programming language used by an interpreter or compiler. 2. *See* pseudocode (definition 1).

**abstract syntax** *n.* A data structure description that is independent of hardware structures and encodings.

**Abstract Syntax Notation One** *n.* The ISO standard notation for independent specification of data types and structures for syntax conversion. *Acronym:* ASN.1. *See also* data type, ISO, syntax.

**abstract syntax tree** *n.* A treelike representation of programs used in many integrated programming environments and structure-oriented editors.

**Abstract Window Toolkit** *n.* A library of Java GUIs (graphical user interfaces) that provides the connections between a Java application and the native GUI of the computer on which the application runs. *Also called:* AWT.

**A/B switch box** *n.* A switch box with two outputs. By flipping the switch, the user can select which to use. *See also* switch (definition 1), switch box.

**AC** *n.* *See* alternating current.

**AC adapter** *n.* An external power supply that converts from a 110 VAC or 220 VAC domestic electric supply ("house current" or "main power") to low-voltage DC, which is required to operate solid-state electronic equipment (such as a laptop computer) that does not include an internal power supply.

**Accelerated Graphics Port** *n.* *See* AGP.

**accelerator** *n.* 1. In applications, a key or key combination used to perform a defined function. *Also called:* shortcut key. 2. In hardware, a device that speeds or enhances the operation of one or more subsystems, leading to improved program performance. *See also* accelerator card, Windows-based accelerator.

**accelerator board** *n.* *See* accelerator card.

**accelerator card** *n.* A printed circuit board that replaces or augments the computer's main microprocessor, resulting in faster performance. *Also called:* accelerator board. *See also* expansion board, graphics accelerator.

**acceptable use policy** *n.* A statement issued by an ISP (Internet service provider) or an online information service that indicates what activities users may or may not engage in while logged into the service. For example, some providers prohibit users from engaging in commercial activity on the network. *Acronym:* AUP. *See also* ISP, online information service.

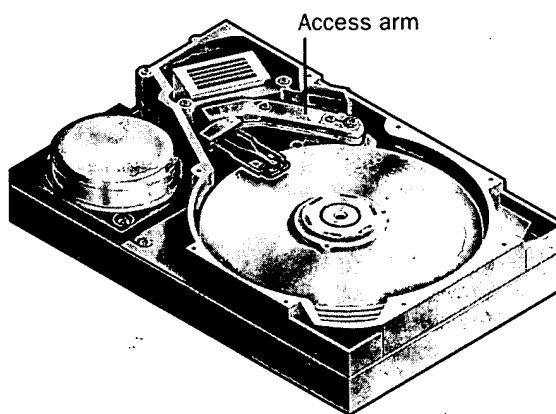
**acceptance test** *n.* A formal evaluation of a hardware product performed by the customer, usually at the factory, to verify that the product is performing according to specifications.

**access**<sup>1</sup> *n.* 1. The act of reading data from or writing data to memory. 2. Connection to the Internet or other network or system.

**access**<sup>2</sup> *vb.* To gain entry to memory in order to read or write data.

**Access** *n.* Microsoft's relational database-management software for the Windows desktop platform. Part of the family of Microsoft Office products, Access in its most recent version (Access 2002) supports Web technology for building, managing, and sharing data. Access 2002 also includes new and improved tools for accessing and viewing information and offers integration with Microsoft's BackOffice database product, SQL Server. *See also* Office.

**access arm** *n.* A mechanical arm that moves the read/write head(s) over the surface of a disk in a disk drive. *See* the illustration. *Also called:* head arm.



**Access arm.**

**ACCESS.bus** *n.* A bidirectional bus for connecting peripherals to a PC. The ACCESS.bus can connect up to 125 low-speed peripherals, such as printers, modems, mice, and keyboards, to the system through a single, general-purpose port. Peripherals that support the ACCESS.bus provide a connector or port connection that is similar to a phone-jack connector and are daisy-chained together. However, the PC communicates directly with each peripheral and vice versa. Connecting an ACCESS.bus device (for example, a printer) to a system results in the system

**echoplex** *n.* In communications, a technique for error detection. The receiving station retransmits data back to the sender's screen, where it can be displayed visually to check for accuracy.

**echo suppressor** *n.* In communications, a method for preventing echoes in telephone lines. Echo suppressors inhibit signals from the listener to the speaker, creating a one-way channel. For modems that send and receive on the same frequency, the echo suppressor must be disabled to allow two-way transmission. This disabling produces the high-pitched tone heard in modem-to-modem connections.

**ECL** *n.* See emitter-coupled logic.

**ECMA** *n.* Acronym for European Computer Manufacturers Association. An organization based in Geneva, Switzerland, whose American counterpart is CBEMA (Computer and Business Equipment Manufacturers Association). Its standard, ECMA-101, is used for transmitting formatted text and graphical images while retaining their original formatting.

**ECMAScript** *n.* A standardized, object-oriented scripting language specification defined by the European Computer Manufacturers Association (ECMA) 262 specification. This language was originally designed to perform computations and manipulate objects within a Web environment. Microsoft implements ECMAScript as JScript, and Netscape implements ECMAScript as JavaScript.

**ECML** *n.* See Electronic Commerce Modeling Language.

**e-commerce** *n.* Short for electronic commerce. Commercial activity that takes place by means of computers connected through a network. Electronic commerce can occur between a user and a vendor through the Internet, an online information service, or a bulletin board system (BBS), or between vendor and customer computers through electronic data interchange (EDI). Also called: e-tail. See also EDI.

**ECP** *n.* Acronym for Enhanced Capabilities Port. A protocol, developed by Microsoft and Hewlett Packard, for bidirectional, high-speed communication between a computer and a printer or scanner. ECP is part of the IEEE 1284 standard, which specifies enhanced parallel ports that are compatible with the older, de facto standard Centronics parallel ports. See also EPP, IEEE 1284.

**e-credit** *n.* See electronic credit.

**e-currency** *n.* See e-money.

**edge** *n.* 1. In graphics, a border joining two polygons. 2. In data structures, a link between two nodes on a tree or graph. See also graph, node (definition 3), tree.

**EDGE** *n.* Acronym for Enhanced Data Rates for Global Evolution or Enhanced Data Rates for GSM and TDMA Evolution. A third-generation enhancement to the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) wireless service, which allows data, multimedia services, and applications to be delivered on broadband at rates up to 384 Kbps.

**edge connector** *n.* The set of wide, flat, metallic contacts on an expansion board that is inserted into a personal computer's expansion slot or a ribbon cable's connector. It connects the board with the system's shared data pathway, or bus, by means of a series of printed lines that connect to the circuits on the board. The number and pattern of lines differ with the various types of connectors. See also expansion board, ribbon cable.

**EDI** *n.* Acronym for Electronic Data Interchange. A standard for exchanging bundles of data between two companies via telephone lines or the Internet. EDI transmits much larger bundles of data than can be transmitted via e-mail. For EDI to be effective, users must agree on certain standards for formatting and exchanging information, such as the X.400 protocol. See also CCITT X series, standard (definition 1).

**edit<sup>1</sup>** *n.* A change made to a file or a document.

**edit<sup>2</sup>** *vb.* 1. To make a change to an existing file or document. Changes to the existing document are saved in memory or in a temporary file but are not added to the document until the program is instructed to save them. Editing programs typically provide safeguards against inadvertent changes, such as by requesting confirmation before saving under an existing filename, by allowing the user to assign a password to a file, or by giving the option of setting the file to read-only status. 2. To run software that makes extensive, predictable changes to a file automatically, such as a linker or a filter for graphics.

**editing keys** *n.* A set of keys on some keyboards that assists in editing. Located between the main keyboard and the numeric keypad, editing keys consist of three pairs: Insert and Delete, Home and End, and Page Up and Page Down.

**IntelliSense** *n.* A Microsoft technology used in various Microsoft products, including Internet Explorer, Visual Basic, Visual Basic C++, and Office that is designed to help users perform routine tasks. In Visual Basic, for example, information such as the properties and methods of an object is displayed as the developer types the name of the object in the Visual Basic code window.

**Intensity Red Green Blue** *n.* See IRGB.

**Interactive** *adj.* Characterized by conversational exchange of input and output, as when a user enters a question or command and the system immediately responds. The interactivity of microcomputers is one of the features that makes them approachable and easy to use.

**Interactive fiction** *n.* A type of computer game in which the user participates in a story by giving commands to the system. The commands given by the user determine, to some extent, the events that occur during the story. Typically the story involves a goal that must be achieved, and the puzzle is to determine the correct sequence of actions that will lead to the accomplishment of that goal. *See also* adventure game.

**Interactive graphics** *n.* A form of user interface in which the user can change and control graphic displays, often with the help of a pointing device such as a mouse or a joystick. Interactive graphics interfaces occur in a range of computer products, from games to computer-aided design (CAD) systems.

**Interactive processing** *n.* Processing that involves the more or less continuous participation of the user. Such a command/response mode is characteristic of microcomputers. *Compare* batch processing (definition 2).

**Interactive program** *n.* A program that exchanges output and input with the user, who typically views a display of some sort and uses an input device, such as a keyboard, mouse, or joystick, to provide responses to the program. A computer game is an interactive program. *Compare* batch program.

**Interactive services** *n.* See BISDN.

**Interactive session** *n.* A processing session in which the user can more or less continuously intervene and control the activities of the computer. *Compare* batch processing (definition 2).

**Interactive television** *n.* A video technology in which a viewer interacts with the television programming. Typical uses of interactive television include Internet access, video

on demand, and video conferencing. *See also* video conferencing.

**Interactive TV** *n.* *See* iTV.

**Interactive video** *n.* The use of computer-controlled video, in the form of a CD-ROM or videodisc, for interactive education or entertainment. *See also* CD-ROM, interactive, interactive television, videodisc.

**Interactive voice response** *n.* A computer that operates through the telephone system, in which input commands and data are transmitted to the computer as spoken words and numbers or tones and dial pulses generated by a telephone instrument; and output instructions and data are received from the computer as prerecorded or synthesized speech. For example, a dial-in service that provides airline flight schedules when you press certain key codes on your telephone is an interactive voice response system. *Also called:* IVR.

**Interactive voice system** *n.* *See* interactive voice response.

**Interapplication communication** *n.* The process of one program sending messages to another program. For example, some e-mail programs allow users to click on a URL within the message. After the user clicks on the URL, browser software will automatically launch and access the URL.

**Interblock gap** *n.* *See* inter-record gap.

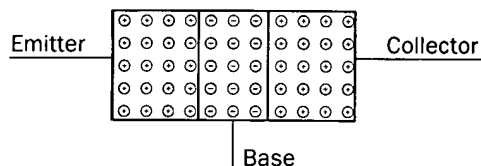
**Interchange File Format** *n.* *See* .iff.

**Interchange Format** *n.* *See* Rich Text Format.

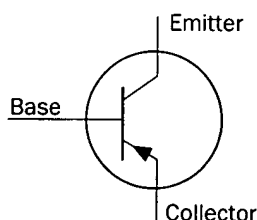
**Interconnect** *n.* 1. *See* System Area Network. 2. An electrical or mechanical connection. Interconnect is the physical connection and communication between two components in a computer system.

**Interface** *n.* 1. The point at which a connection is made between two elements so that they can work with each other or exchange information. 2. Software that enables a program to work with the user (the user interface, which can be a command-line interface, menu-driven interface, or a graphical user interface), with another program such as the operating system, or with the computer's hardware. *See also* application programming interface, graphical user interface. 3. A card, plug, or other device that connects pieces of hardware with the computer so that information can be moved from place to place. For example, standardized interfaces such as RS-232-C standard and

Internal diagram



Schematic diagram

**PNP transistor.**

**pocket Active Server Pages** *n.* A scaled-down version of the Active Server Pages optimized for server-side Mobile Channels scripting. *Acronym:* pASP.

**pocket Excel** *n.* A scaled-down version of Microsoft Excel for the Pocket PC. *See also* Microsoft Excel.

**Pocket PC** *n.* A personal handheld computing device based on specifications designed by Microsoft and running the Microsoft Windows for Pocket PC operating system. Pocket PCs maintain the look of a Windows operating system display screen and offer compact versions of many of the applications that run on Windows-powered personal computers. A number of manufacturers produce Pocket PCs, including Hewlett-Packard, Compaq, and Casio.

**pocket Word** *n.* A scaled-down version of Microsoft Word for the Pocket PC. *See also* Microsoft Word.

**point**<sup>1</sup> *n.* 1. A unit of measure used in printing, equal to approximately  $\frac{1}{72}$  of an inch. Character height and the amount of space (leading) between lines of text are usually specified in points. 2. A single pixel on the screen, identified by its row and column numbers. 3. A location in

a geometric form, represented by two or more numbers that constitute its coordinates.

**point**<sup>2</sup> *vb.* To move an arrow or other such indicator to a particular item or position on the screen by using direction keys or by maneuvering a pointing device such as a mouse.

**point-and-click** *adj.* Enabling a user to select data and activate programs by using a mouse or other pointing device to move a cursor to a desired location ("point") and pressing a button on the mouse or other pointing device ("click").

**PointCast** *n.* An Internet service that delivers and displays a personalized set of news articles to individual users. Unlike the World Wide Web and other Internet applications, PointCast is a *push* technology, where the server automatically uploads data without a specific command from the client. *See also* server (definition 2).

**point chart** *n.* *See* scatter diagram.

**point diagram** *n.* *See* scatter diagram.

**pointer** *n.* In programming and information processing, a variable that contains the memory location (address) of some data rather than the data itself. *See also* address<sup>1</sup> (definition 1), handle (definition 1), mouse pointer, reference<sup>1</sup>.

**pointing device** *n.* An input device used to control an on-screen cursor for such actions as "pressing" on-screen buttons in dialog boxes, choosing menu items, and selecting ranges of cells in spreadsheets or groups of words in a document. A pointing device is often used to create drawings or graphical shapes. The most common pointing device is the mouse, which was popularized by its use with the Apple Macintosh. Other pointing devices include graphics tablets, styluses, light pens, joysticks, pucks, and trackballs. *See also* graphics tablet, joystick, light pen, mouse, puck, stylus, trackball.

**point listing** *n.* A database of popular Web sites categorized by topics of interest and often rated by design and content.

**point of presence** *n.* 1. A point in a wide area network to which a user can connect with a local telephone call. 2. A point at which a long distance telephone carrier connects to a local telephone exchange or to an individual user. *Acronym:* POP.

**point of sale**

**point-to-point** *n.* A communication system in which dedicated and destination information, in which the signal routes the signal. *called:* point-to-point.

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**Poisson distribution** *n.* A statistical distribution in which the probability of a given number of events occurring in a fixed interval of time or space is proportional to the number of events. *called:* Poisson distribution.

**poke** *vb.* To push or press. *called:* poke.

**polar coordinate** *n.* A coordinate system in which the position of a point is determined by its distance from the origin and its angle from a reference direction. *called:* polar coordinate.

**upload<sup>2</sup>** *vb.* To transfer a copy of a file from a local computer to a remote computer. *Compare* download.

**UPnP** *n.* Acronym for Universal Plug and Play. A Microsoft initiative which prompted the creation of the UPnP Forum for interconnecting computers, appliances, networks, and services. UPnP extends conventional Plug and Play to include devices connected to networks. It allows peripheral devices to discover and connect to other devices and to enumerate the characteristics of those devices. UPnP is intended to be an element of home networking, in which PCs, appliances, and the services they provide are linked together.

**UPnP Device Architecture** *n.* A specification developed by the Universal Plug and Play (UPnP) Forum that defines the structure of UPnP networking. The UPnP Device Architecture, formerly known as the DCP Framework, provides information about discovery, description, control, eventing, and presentation in a UPnP network. *See also* UPnP networking.

**UPnP Forum** *n.* A consortium of companies and individuals that oversees Universal Plug and Play (UPnP) specifications, protocols, logos, sample implementations, test suites, white papers, and other UPnP-related efforts. *See also* UPnP, UPnP Device Architecture, UPnP networking.

**UPnP networking** *n.* The peer-to-peer networking of intelligent machines, appliances, wireless devices, computers, and other devices according to the Universal Plug and Play (UPnP) Device Architecture. UPnP networking uses control points, devices, services, and protocols including GENA, SOAP, SSDP, standard TCP/IP, and other Internet protocols. *See also* UPnP Device Architecture.

**uppercase** *adj.* Of, pertaining to, or characterized by capital letters. *Compare* lowercase.

**upper memory area** *n.* *See* UMA (definition 1).

**upper memory block** *n.* *See* UMB.

**UPS** *n.* Acronym for uninterruptible power supply. A device, connected between a computer (or other electronic equipment) and a power source (usually an outlet receptacle), that ensures that electrical flow to the computer is not interrupted because of a blackout and, in most cases, protects the computer against potentially damaging events, such as power surges and brownouts. All UPS units are equipped with a battery and a loss-of-power sensor; if the sensor detects a loss of power, it switches over to the battery so that the user has time to save his or her work and shut off the computer. *See also* blackout, brownout.

**upstream<sup>1</sup>** *n.* The direction in which information is delivered from a client to a (Web) server. *Compare* downstream<sup>1</sup>.

**upstream<sup>2</sup>** *adj.* 1. The location of a server in relation to another server. *Compare* downstream<sup>2</sup> (definition 1). 2. The direction in which data moves from an individual computer to the remote network. With certain communications technologies, such as ADSL, cable modems, and high-speed 56-Kbps modems, data flows upstream more slowly than downstream. For example, a 56-Kbps modem can deliver data at a 56-Kbps maximum only downstream; upstream, it delivers data at either 28.8 or 33.6 Kbps. *Compare* downstream<sup>2</sup> (definition 2).

**uptime** *n.* The amount or percentage of time a computer system or associated hardware is functioning and available for use. *Compare* downtime.

**upward-compatible** *adj.* Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a computer product, especially software, designed to perform adequately with other products that are expected to become widely used in the foreseeable future. The use of standards and conventions makes upward compatibility easier to achieve.

**urban legend** *n.* A widely distributed story that remains in circulation in spite of the fact that it is not true. Many urban legends have been floating around the Internet and other online services for years, including the request for cards for the sick boy in England (he's long since recovered and grown up), the cookie or cake recipe that cost \$250 (it's a myth), and the Good Times or Penpal Greetings virus, which will infect your computer when you read an e-mail message (it does not exist). *See also* Good Times virus.

**URC** *n.* *See* Uniform Resource Citation.

**URI** *n.* *See* Uniform Resource Identifier.

**URL** *n.* Acronym for Uniform Resource Locator. An address for a resource on the Internet. URLs are used by Web browsers to locate Internet resources. A URL specifies the protocol to be used in accessing the resource (such as http: for a World Wide Web page or ftp: for an FTP site), the name of the server on which the resource resides (such as //www.whitehouse.gov), and, optionally, the path to a resource (such as an HTML document or a file on that server). *See also* FTP<sup>1</sup> (definition 1), HTML, HTTP, path (definition 1), server (definition 2), virtual path (definition 1), Web browser.

**URN** *n.* *See* Uniform Resource Name.

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